

Statement of Michael J. Viera, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President
Citrus Community College District
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As superintendent/president of Citrus College in Glendora, CA, I would like to thank the commission for this opportunity to provide the perspective of a local community college district to the Commission's recommendation for consolidation of the California Community College Chancellor's Office with four other agencies, creating a unified Higher Education Division.

Under the current structure, our students, our faculty and staff, and members of our communities all have access to decisions made on their local college campuses. Locally-elected trustees are held accountable to the communities they serve. The Board of Governors provides coordination and makes decisions on wide-ranging topics, only after consultation with all stakeholders, in a process that provides for full public hearing and comment.

California currently has over 35,000,000 residents, a population far greater than the states upon which the proposed CPR model is based. Our system of 109 community colleges represents the largest segment of higher education in the world. Nearly two-thirds of the graduates of CSU and one-third of the graduates of UC transferred from community colleges.

The elimination of the Board of Governors and the consolidation of the Chancellor's Office with other agencies with which there is little overlap, will render our system less effective and accountable.

The current partnership between local districts, the Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office is an efficient and cost-effective means of governance. It gives our system a measure of equity and respect, similar to that which is afforded other segments of higher education in California, and it provides all Californians access to decisions affecting their education and their lives.